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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

**sHB 6624 (as amended by House “A” and “B”)\***

### ***AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES.***

#### **SUMMARY:**

This bill:

1. requires interdistrict magnet school operators to annually report aggregate as well as individual school financial audits to the education commissioner;
2. requires exclusive use of “state-assigned student identifier” to track official student documents, and also expands the list of relevant documents and tracking purposes;
3. eliminates indemnification eligibility for teacher mentors and assessors currently offered by employing boards of education;
4. broadens the scope of services that marital and family therapists may offer while employed by local or regional boards of education;
5. changes the procedure for establishing tuition rates for vocational apprenticeship programs;
6. expands the validity of the elementary education certificate for kindergarten instruction;
7. requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to study alternative school programs;
8. exempts certain teacher records kept by SDE from the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA);
9. expands eligibility for alternative route to certification (ARC)

programs for school administrators;

10. allows schools to apply for a school security infrastructure competitive grant for expenses incurred on or after January 1, 2013, rather than April 3, 2013;
11. exempts a person from the competency and subject matter exams for prospective teachers if the person has completed at least three school years of service (30 months) in the sought-after Connecticut endorsement area in another state's public or private school during the past 10 years; and
12. allows local or regional boards of education to award a diploma to those who withdrew from high school to work in a job that assisted the World War II effort.

The bill also makes several technical and conforming changes.

\*House Amendment "A":

1. eliminates the requirement that SDE develop a new state longitudinal data system,
2. expands the validity of the elementary education certificate for kindergarten instruction,
3. requires SDE to study alternative school programs,
4. exempts certain teacher records kept by SDE from the Freedom of Information Act,
5. expands eligibility for ARC programs,
6. allows schools to apply for grant reimbursement for school security expenses incurred three months earlier than permitted under PA 13-3, and
7. exempts certain out-of-state educators from competency and subject matter Connecticut certification exams.

\*House Amendment "B" allows school boards to award a diploma to those who withdrew from high school to work in a job that assisted the World War II effort.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Various, (see below), with technical and conforming changes effective upon passage.

### **MAGNET SCHOOL FINANCIAL AUDITS**

The bill specifies that interdistrict magnet school operators, rather than the schools themselves, must annually give the education commissioner financial audits. Additionally, the bill requires operators to report two types of audits, rather than just one. The first type of audit is for each individual magnet school, as required under current law, by its operator. The second type is an aggregate audit combining all magnet schools run by the operator. By law, a magnet school operator may be: (1) a local or regional school district, (2) a regional education service center, (3) multiple school districts under a cooperative agreement, or (4) the Board of Trustees of the Community Technical Colleges, which currently operates on behalf of Manchester and Quinebaug Valley Community Colleges and Goodwin College.

The bill also makes related changes in provisions that adjust magnet school grant payouts based upon annual financial audits. It requires that the final grant payment to a magnet operator in a fiscal year be adjusted based upon the aggregate financial audit submitted by the operator, rather than the audit submitted by individual magnet schools.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

### **USE OF STUDENT IDENTIFIERS**

The bill (1) requires that a student's state-assigned identifier be used to track him or her and (2) eliminates the school district's option to use a district-provided identifier.

### ***Official Student Documents***

The bill requires all local and regional boards of education to include a student's state-assigned student identifier on all official

student documents, rather than on transcripts, as required under current law. The bill's definition of "official student documents" includes, among other things, (1) transcripts, (2) report cards, (3) attendance records, (4) disciplinary reports, and (5) student withdrawal forms.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

### ***Post-High School Tracking***

Under current law, the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) must require public and independent colleges and universities to track the state-assigned or district-provided student identifiers of all in-state students until they graduate or end their enrollment. The bill eliminates (1) BOR's role and (2) the requirement that the colleges and universities track students with district-provided identifiers.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

### **TEACHER INDEMNIFICATION**

The bill removes teacher mentors and assessors from the class of employees eligible under current law to receive indemnification from their respective boards of education for fees and costs relating to legal claims, demands, suits, or judgments. By law, claims eligible for indemnification must be related to negligence or civil rights and must arise while the employee was acting within the scope of employment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

### **MARITAL AND FAMILY THERAPISTS**

The bill permits marital and family therapists employed by local or regional boards of education to provide services to students, families, and student parents or guardians. It also requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to make regulations authorizing this provision.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

### **NONDISCLOSURE OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE RECORDS**

#### ***Records Kept in the State Longitudinal Data System***

The bill establishes that records kept by SDE of individual teacher performance and evaluation in the state longitudinal data system are not public records and are exempt from public access, unless a teacher consents in writing to have a local or regional board of education release them. This change has no legal effect, since House Amendment “A” eliminates SDE’s duty to develop a state longitudinal data system.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

***Records Kept by SDE***

The bill establishes that records kept by SDE about teacher performance and evaluations are not public records and are exempt from public access, unless a teacher consents to their release in writing. It also explicitly establishes that any records kept by SDE about teacher misconduct are public records that do not require teacher consent prior to disclosure. Under current law, such records kept by local and regional boards of education are already subject to these provisions.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION EXTENSION FUND**

The bill requires the technical high school system board, rather than SBE, to set tuition fees for students in preparatory and supplemental programs, including apprenticeship programs, that are established under the Vocational Education Extension Fund. Established by SBE, this fund contains a “vocational education extension account,” which must be used to operate preparatory and supplemental programs (including apprenticeships) and to buy materials and equipment required for program operation.

Also, the bill eliminates the \$100 fee ceiling for enrollment in a single apprenticeship program or course.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

**ELEMENTARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATION ENDORSEMENT**

The bill increases eligibility for elementary education certification that is valid for kindergarten teaching in addition to grades one

through six. Under current law, any elementary education certificate issued prior to July 1, 2013 is valid for grades kindergarten through six; any issued after that date are valid for grades one through six. However, current law grants an exception for certain students certified between July 1, 2013 and July 1, 2017: those who have been admitted to a teacher preparation program for elementary education certification before the fall 2012 semester and complete the program by June 30, 2017 may use the certificate to teach kindergarten. The bill broadens this exception to include students who are admitted to and complete such program at any time before June 30, 2017, making the program enrollment date and length more flexible.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

#### **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PROGRAM STUDY**

The bill requires SDE to conduct a study of all alternative school programs offered by local and regional boards of education. SDE must submit a report on the study to the Education Committee by February 1, 2014.

Each board of education that offers the following programs must give SDE all relevant information for purposes of the study, which will examine:

1. alternative schools offered by boards for students age 19 and older who lack credits for graduation before age 21;
2. alternative educational opportunities offered by youth service bureaus;
3. alternative educational opportunities in adult education during a period of expulsion;
4. alternative educational opportunities offered by boards for students under age 16 during a period of expulsion, or for students between ages 16 and 18 who wish to continue their education during a period of first-time expulsion;

5. alternative programs for students having difficulty succeeding in traditional education programs;
6. alternative schools for students to develop career awareness and orientation through exploration of career interests; and
7. alternative schools that educate struggling, at-risk students separately from students in the general education program.

SDE's study must:

1. examine alternative school enrollment and discharge criteria; enrollment data by gender, race, and ethnicity; curriculum; length of school day and year; attendance, truancy, graduation rates; and academic performance;
2. evaluate program effectiveness in meeting students' needs; and
3. determine the degree of program compliance with statutory requirements for alternative scheduling of school sessions, length of school year, and curriculum.

When SDE reports the study findings to the Education Committee, it must also include recommendations for legislation on topics including (1) a definition of "alternative school program," (2) enrollment requirements, (3) length of school day and year, (4) curriculum requirements, and (5) graduation requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

#### **ARC PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

The bill requires any SBE-approved ARC program for school administrators to admit any person who:

1. provided service to a local or regional board of education in a supervisory or managerial role for at least four school years (40 months),
2. held professional educator certification for at least one school

year out of the four (10 months),

3. holds a bachelor's degree from a college or university accredited by BOR or SBE or regionally accredited, and
4. received a performance-based recommendation from his or her immediate supervisor or district administrator.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

### **SCHOOL SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS**

The bill permits the school security infrastructure competitive grant program to reimburse a municipality for certain safety expenses incurred by its board of education on or after January 1, 2013, rather than on or after April 3, 2013 as currently required under Public Act 13-3. This grant program invites boards of education to apply to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) for a grant for expenses related to development or improvement of a school's security infrastructure based upon a building assessment and either (1) school personnel training in the use of the security infrastructure; or (2) the purchase of portable entrance security devices, such as screening machines or wands.

Although the bill also allows school boards to apply for this grant to cover security expenses for such things as cameras, doors, and buzzer systems incurred on and after January 1, 2013, a board would be ineligible if such expenses were incurred before April 3, 2013. This is because under current law eligible expenses must be based upon a building assessment, which would not have been until passage of PA 13-3 on April 3, 2013.

Also, the bill requires school boards that have submitted applications to DESPP for grant reimbursement after passage of PA 13-3 on April 3, 2013 to reapply for reimbursement after this bill takes effect.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage



## **TESTING WAIVER FOR CERTIFIED OUT-OF-STATE PUPIL PERSONNEL**

The bill allows a person seeking Connecticut educator certification to waive completion of the competency and subject matter exams if the person (1) holds out-of-state certification that is at least equivalent to an initial educator certificate in Connecticut, (2) has completed at least three years of service in the sought-after endorsement area in the past 10 years, and (3) the service was performed in an SBE-approved public or private out-of-state school.

By law, a person may waive completion of the tests (1) upon completion of at least three years of teaching experience in the same endorsement area for the past 10 years in a SBE-approved public or private out-of-state school or (2) if he or she holds a master's degree or higher in the subject area for the sought-after Connecticut certification.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

## **HONORARY HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS**

The bill allows local or regional boards of education to award a diploma to any person who withdrew from high school between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946 to work in a job that assisted the World War II effort, as long as that veteran has been a Connecticut resident for at least 50 consecutive years.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2013

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 26 Nay 0 (03/28/2013)

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 50 Nay 0 (05/01/2013)